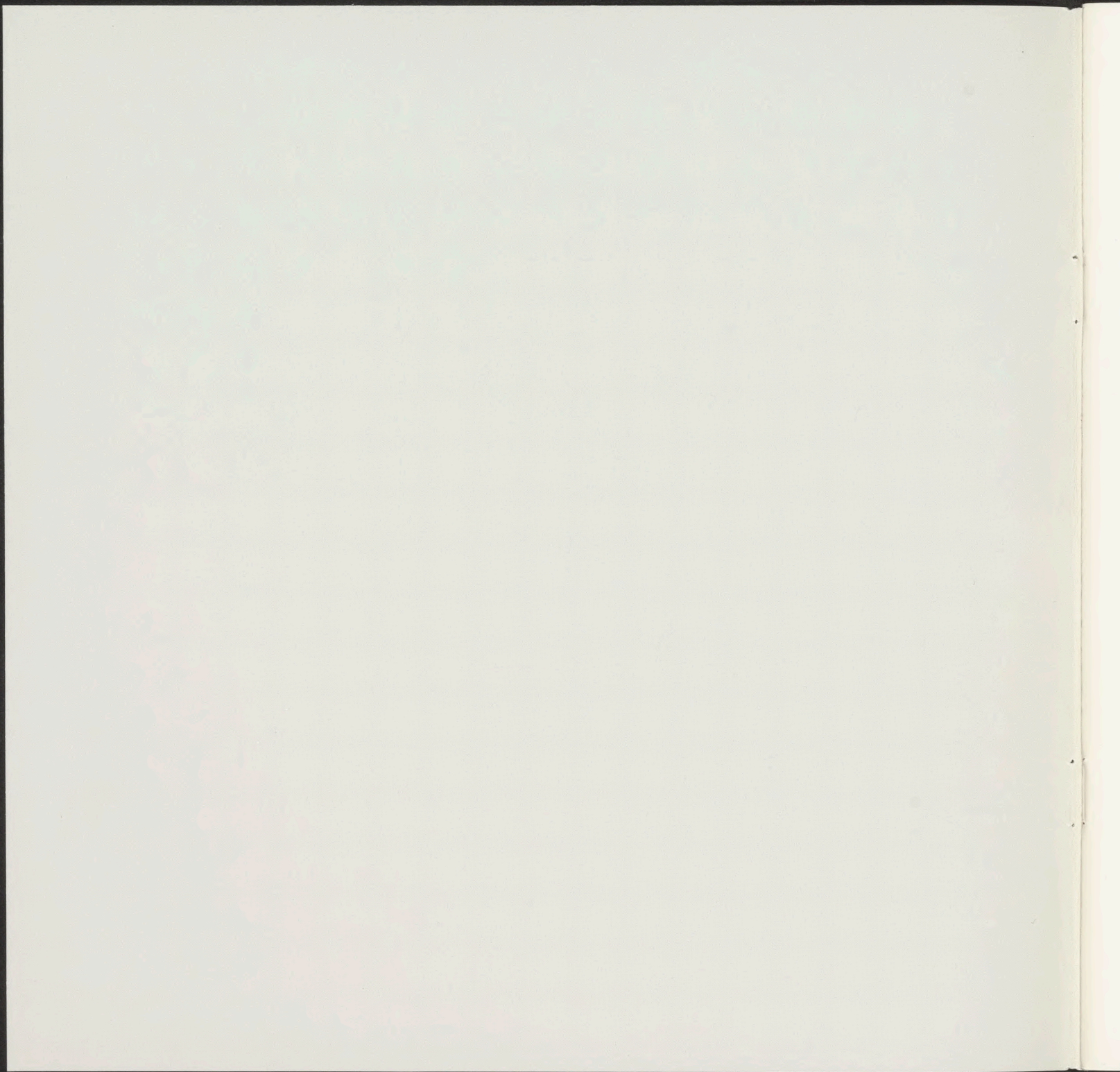


TIME PIECES



WRIGHT MORRIS



TIME PIECES

THE PHOTOGRAPHS AND WORDS
OF WRIGHT MORRIS

MARCH 16–MAY 15, 1983

THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D.C.



FOREWORD

The series of exhibitions of which this is the twenty-ninth, began under the auspices of "The Nation's Capital in Photographs" in 1976. In that Bicentennial year, the Corcoran Gallery commissioned eight American photographers working in various regions and styles to come to Washington, D.C. and produce each a body of work to be shown in the Museum, accompanied by an illustrated catalogue. Each publication reproduced a substantial number of photographs with an accompanying text. As it developed, this project would represent both the first chapter in a lengthily ongoing sequence of photography shows at the Corcoran, and my own catapulting initiation into the world of American art photography.

The exhibitions and catalogues invented for that first series of commissioned works evolved into a program of more traditionally curated and documented solo exhibitions at the rate of four each year, sponsored jointly by Polaroid Corporation and the National Endowment for the Arts. All have been co-organized by myself and Frances Fralin. The basic structure for the series, "Photography at the Corcoran," has entailed monographic presentations of photographs by living American artists, some unknown, many already notable, a few venerated. Usually the exhibitions have included forty to sixty works, shown in two adjoining Corcoran ground-floor galleries. None has been in any sense retrospective. The subjects have varied so flagrantly in stylistic and technical approach that together they constitute what is, to put it gently, an idiosyncratic view of recent American photography. Yet, however divergent and heterodox these photography shows may be taken as a series, or

however dense and concentrated taken singly, the ongoing project has gradually assumed an important and rather startlingly *official* identity within the domain of recent American fine art photography.

"Time Pieces: The Photographs and Words of Wright Morris" is the first in this ongoing series to be guest-curated; it is appropriate that its organizer, Mark Power, has himself been the subject of one of the shows in the series. Mark is a photographer and photography critic who has taught in the Corcoran School of Art since 1971, and exhibited frequently in the Washington area. His deep sympathy for the poignantly narrative aesthetic which Wright Morris represents infuses the spirit of this catalogue and show in every aspect. Invited as guest curator to pick an artist for this show, Mark gravitated to Morris not just out of professional respect for the older artist, but with a strong personal identification. This artist/writer to artist/writer affinity gives a special resonance to the project. In all parts of the undertaking—Mark Power's essay, Wright Morris's carefully reedited texts, and the group of photographs themselves, produced in the late spring of 1947—we sense a reverberating unity of spirit. Power and Morris share a temperamental vision which is attuned to both the cultural drama and the strange formal clarity of American small-town life. Wright Morris's tenaciously unsentimental appropriation of this potentially nostalgia-laden subject—our recent American rural selves, our roots or our common memory—this act of interpretive love is somehow redoubled in its offering up by a fellow artist.

JANE LIVINGSTON
Associate Director and Chief Curator

INTRODUCTION

On first glance, Wright Morris's photographs appear to be about objects, rural artifacts imbued with a homely nostalgia whose wistfulness is oddly tempered by a classical severity of style.

Nostalgia is somewhat discredited in photography these days and so, for that matter, is regionalism. Regionalism is more likely to be a matter of style than content in contemporary work, and nostalgia is a quality we only respond to in vintage prints and family albums. It's not so much we deny the past in our meanderings through antiquity; it's that we trivialize it: we confront it only if it is sentimental and safely removed from the present. We enjoy nostalgia at the level of a Wallace Nutting print, but when we encounter the work of Wright Morris we are confronted with nostalgia as an idea as well as a passion. For Wright Morris it is part longing and part nausea—as he says in his novel *World in the Attic* “. . . It is hard to tell where nostalgia leaves off and nausea begins.”

It is a regional past that Morris celebrates: the past, specifically, of Nebraska, of the American plains in the years before and during World War Two. It is a region explored in his literature as well as his photography. Although regional, it would be a mistake to consider this work parochial, for Morris speaks of a past that most Americans share regardless of how well they remember it or how successfully they have forgotten it. Before World War Two, two-thirds of the country was rural, and most of our forebears lived on farms.

While the past Morris remembers is personal, it is also a mythic, even a fictional past in which we can all share. He evokes it by transforming it into photographs

of structures and artifacts, exactly seen and precisely rendered. As he says, “I see many (of these objects) as secular icons. They have for me a holy meaning which they seek to give out.”

One might also point out they are reliquary, that is, icons which give off the presence of the dead. “The dead are always with us frequently overshadowing the presence of the living,” writes Morris, “I realized the dead, on one level or another, constitute our present. . . .”

These secular relics are invariably structures and objects worn by use, cherished and sometimes abandoned by the human hand, the human body. To those of us insensitive to the past and the unseen presences of the dead, such threadbare qualities suggest quaintness or perhaps collectibility, but to Wright Morris the elegiac emotion, the tone, the air which these images breathe is more likely to be that of wistfulness, of pathos.

Pathos, however implied—and often it is implied because of the uncompromising directness of his vision—is regarded by Morris as “. . . very American. It is the music or syrup in which we have our existence.” Commentators on photography such as Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes suggest that pathos is the very essence of photography itself. The fact that time in a photograph is locked in an image while irretrievably lost as an experience is a poignant fact. Objects described in a photograph are objects we only recover with our sight: that sense of loss and gain is pathos. People in a photograph are people trapped in a trance of the motionless present; that is the pathos of inertia. Looking at portraits made in the past, we sense these people are

not so much dead as missing, and their presence in the image is testimony to their absence. There is a special poignance to the missing, a lack of finality which the dead have earned.

Morris himself puts it more simply: "I wanted evidence of man in the artifacts that revealed his passing." With rare exception, Morris doesn't photograph people, but without exception his structures and artifacts are about place and the passing of people and their presence among us for a time as revealed by their use of these relics.

Considered individually as images, Wright Morris's photographs are works informed by the esthetic of their time, the 40s. An occasional Westonian reverence for form, an apparent (though mostly illusory) trace of FSA humanism, and an occasional coincidence with some of Walker Evans's concerns mark the appearance of much of his work. When the meaning of his work is considered these visual antecedents seem relatively unimportant: they are the source of his eye, not his art. Of course, his art is not to be found in his photographs alone. One must also consider his novels and his photo-texts, the unique fusion of words and images that he began experimenting with as early as 1938.

The photo-texts are more than just a hybrid of image and literature, and they make his work into something other than just "literary" photography. They constitute a genuine synthesis, a new form, common perhaps in cinema (but with spoken word) but rare in still photography, a form which lifts Morris's art above the limitations of place and period.

Morris recognized early that the photo-texts were a device to introduce fiction to the realm of photography, hitherto, an impregnable bastion of realism. "An accurate rendering of what is real fulfilled the possibilities of fiction," he wrote, and his accurate renderings, both in image and in word, fulfill the possibilities of both documentation and imagination. It is not that photography has to be one or the other; Morris's contribution is to show photography can be both, simultaneously. That the real can also be the imaginary is a new idea in contemporary photography although Morris first explored it more than forty years ago, specifically in the photo-texts, and particularly in his studies of character.

Of course, character in photography is not a modernist idea; one only need think of Nadar's Parisians, almost as varied as Dickens's cast of characters, or in our own time, of Sander's stalwart burghers and Arbus's gallery of sad outcasts. But we have only recently come to realize that these characters, although drawn from real life, are just as fictional as any people in literature; in photographs, they take on a life separate from their 'real' identities. In other words, a paradox: that which is (or was, at one time) real is simultaneously imaginary—but, for that matter, *no less true*. That we have come to this realization is partly due to Wright Morris's photo-texts.

Morris's photographs document the artifacts of people just after they have passed—either out of the room or out of life. The accompanying text often describes farmers, their wives, and the small-town bourgeoisie of the American plains, people who are, in Morris's words, "mute, implacable, yet expectant." Rarely does written

description impinge upon visual notation; instead, they play off one another in a way that synthesizes both.

"I found in what I had written the verbal images that enhanced and enlarged upon the photographs. The unexpected resonance and play between apparent contraries and unrelated impressions was precisely what delighted the imagination."

Morris's writing records with a photographic clarity—as if he is writing with the eye rather than the hand—how his characters sit, what they wear, and how they look when they are sleeping. As if they are people in a photograph, he seems less concerned with what they think, how they feel, or what they dream. Perhaps a paradox, but just one of many implicit in Morris's work. For example: his photographic style is purist and documentary but the effect of his photo-texts is literary and fictional. And though he came of age during the

humanist concerns of the 30s, his interest in his characters is not particularly social. He is more a chronicler of man's fate than he is man's condition. And another example: When he is most passionate about character and place, his style—in both image and word—becomes dry, taciturn, ascetic and classical. He is, in a word, a romantic classicist—and that in itself is a contradiction.

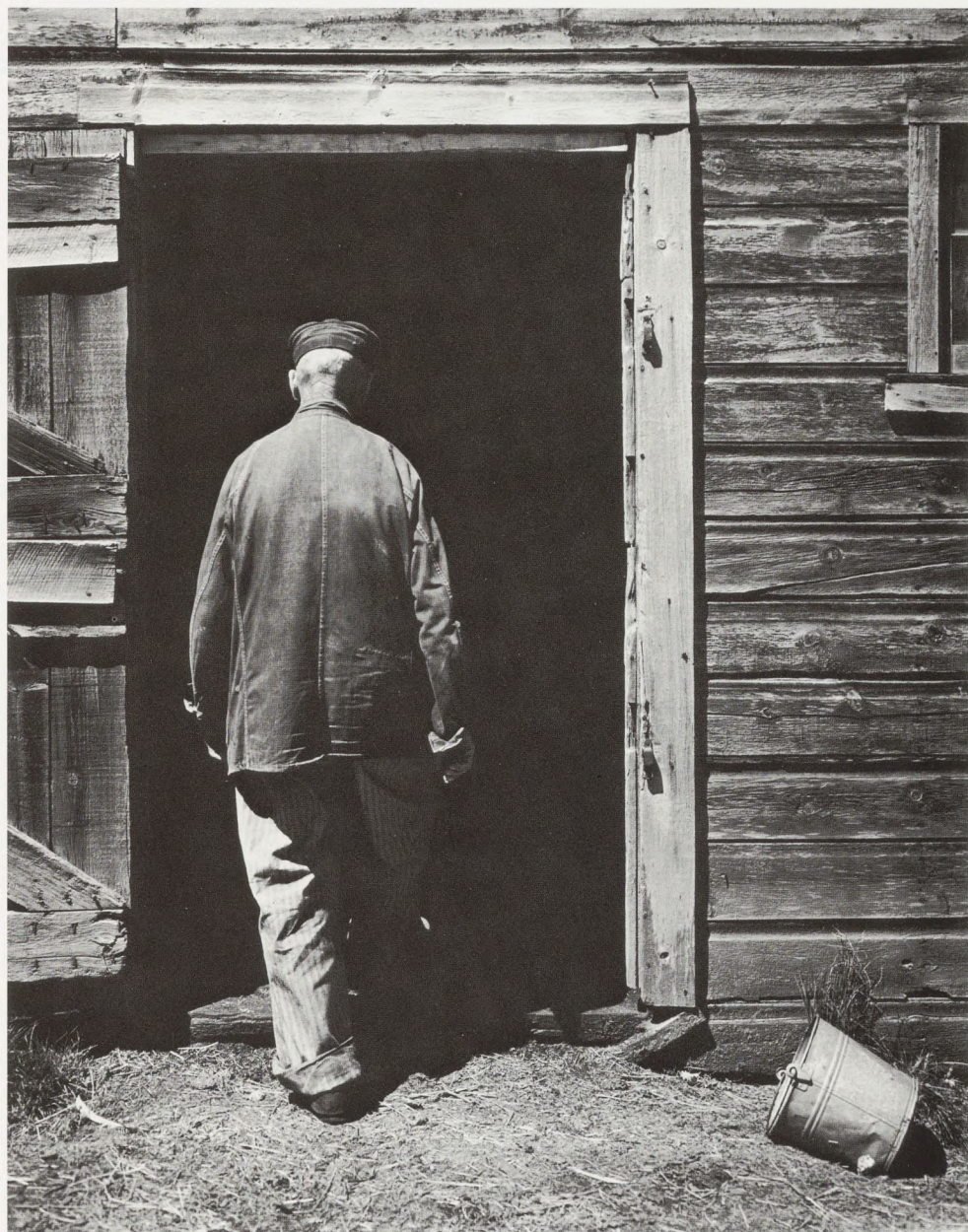
These are some of the sources of the tensions and strengths in Wright Morris's work, a work that after nineteen novels and five photo-texts, is still ongoing. It is these intricate relationships—between tenses of time, relic and memory, fiction and reality, between word and image—which define Morris's esthetic intelligence. As Roland Barthes has said, "Ultimately, photography is subversive not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is pensive, *when it thinks*."

MARK POWER

THE TIME: May 1947

THE PLACE: A Farm near Norfolk, Nebraska

FOR reasons of personal adornment the old man wears a nautical hat. He has others, but perhaps this one will bring rain. A pattern for living, the blueprint of it, can be seen in the white stitching of the denim, the jacket shaped to his shoulders as his body has been shaped to its chores, the figure once on the front of the carpet worn through to the back.



THE farmer meant to add a porch to the front of the house, but why bother, since nobody ever used it? There was no need for a door at all except to stir up a draft. Visitors followed the driveway to the barn, came in through the back door, and left through it. The yard at the front was like a garden gone to weeds, with the glare off the gravel road in the summer, off the fields of snow in the winter. The children liked to stand at the oval window watching it snow. In order to see out through the frosted glass the boys would scratch a hole with their finger nails, but a sister, who was older and smarter, would make a clear round hole in the frost with her warm breath.



CLOTHES are worn until they shape to the wearer, then they are worn until they are shapeless. Sweaters hang like the tattered remnants of creatures that have vanished. The palms wear off the gloves, the cuffs off the sleeves, the nickel off the door-knobs, the plate off the silver, the shine off the stovepipe, the label off the flour sacks, the enamel off the dipper, and the gold off the Christmas jewelry. Between wearing something in and wearing something out the line is as vague as the receding horizon, and as hard to account for as the missing hairs of a brush.



THE drawer is lined with a sheet from Capper's Weekly for April 29, 1939, eight years before this photograph was taken. A glimpse of Hitler's army chief can be seen just above the blades of the knives, Crown silver plate brought to the plains by the homesteaders. Life has proved to be harder on the the pieces that have been replaced. The forks, especially, found it hard going, the tines used to open the plugged holes in the cans of condensed milk, or pry up the lids of Karo syrup pails. Spoons were stored in an iced tea glass, their bottoms up.



CAPPER'S WEEKLY, APRIL 23, 1938

America Save These Children?

Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas Or
at Topeka, Sunday Evening, April 23, 1938

the hearts and ruining the minds and bodies of
of children as Nazi Germany has evoked in our
its program to "purify"—God forgive them—for
for using that word purity—the German peo-

HITLER'S ARMY CHIEF

Woman's...

By Mrs. Lila Russell

T HE other evening I took my children to a picture show. We were seated in the gallery in the darkness. Wilbur Jr. sat next to me and the other children were scattered about the room.

ed With Qualities

ly have been with
the children. We
all and give all
attempt to fight
human beings by
any speaker among
us today.

Das. Ten thousand
of two million
the Jewish people
are being driven
out of their homes
and trying to help.

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ews in Review

On June 20, 1938, the
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Mother Nature Is Systematic

On June 20, 1938, the
will reach the
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Up to 250

PROPPED on her arms at the sink, propped on her legs at the stove, propped on both legs and arms, one hand clutching a dish rag, or spread flat on her back clutching the bed frame, she knew the sin of idleness and the holiness of work. Seated with the levers of her limbs folded, she continued to rock, a machine idling, an engine with a head of steam faintly hissing, a marvel of devices, finely ground as a lens and honed to a knife's edge, fit to the daily tasks like a work glove, she was the triumph of form following function, the function followed to its end.



Love, too, is work, childbirth its reward, a task to be performed like seedtime and harvest. One paid for the miracle of life with the labor of death. Not everyone had a talent for it. A woman should be long suffering, her death long remembered, the funeral a consecrated working party, the shovel handles sticking up out of the raw mounds of earth. Over the wide valley a dim rain, the bluffs along the river grained like clapboards, the prevailing wind blowing a cloudlike mist along the tracks. The mourners stand on the boards edging the grave and as the first spade of earth falls hollow on the coffin, let it be one moment in their lives they will never forget.



HE was like weeds in the spring, corn over the summer, hay in the fall, manure over the winter, and a sack of grain after Sunday dinner. He was strong as a horse, stubborn as a mule, slow as molasses and smart as a whip. His roots were long but not much showed above the ground. He had a good word for horses and other people's children, a knowledge of livestock, a reckoning for dead stock, an elephant's memory, and an old hen's bottom, but what there was that was human in his nature was slow to emerge.



THE boy who spent his summer vacation on this farm did not remember the stove. In those days—referred to as early—the stove was taken down in the summer and stored in the cob shed. The pattern is long gone from the linoleum on the floor, but it has been touched up with dabs of brushwork by the farmer's wife. The rug in the parlor is a late addition, without the holes worn by the rocker. In the summer the room seems a lot cooler with the blind drawn, but that's unusual. It was raised to its usual height as soon as the photographer had taken the picture.



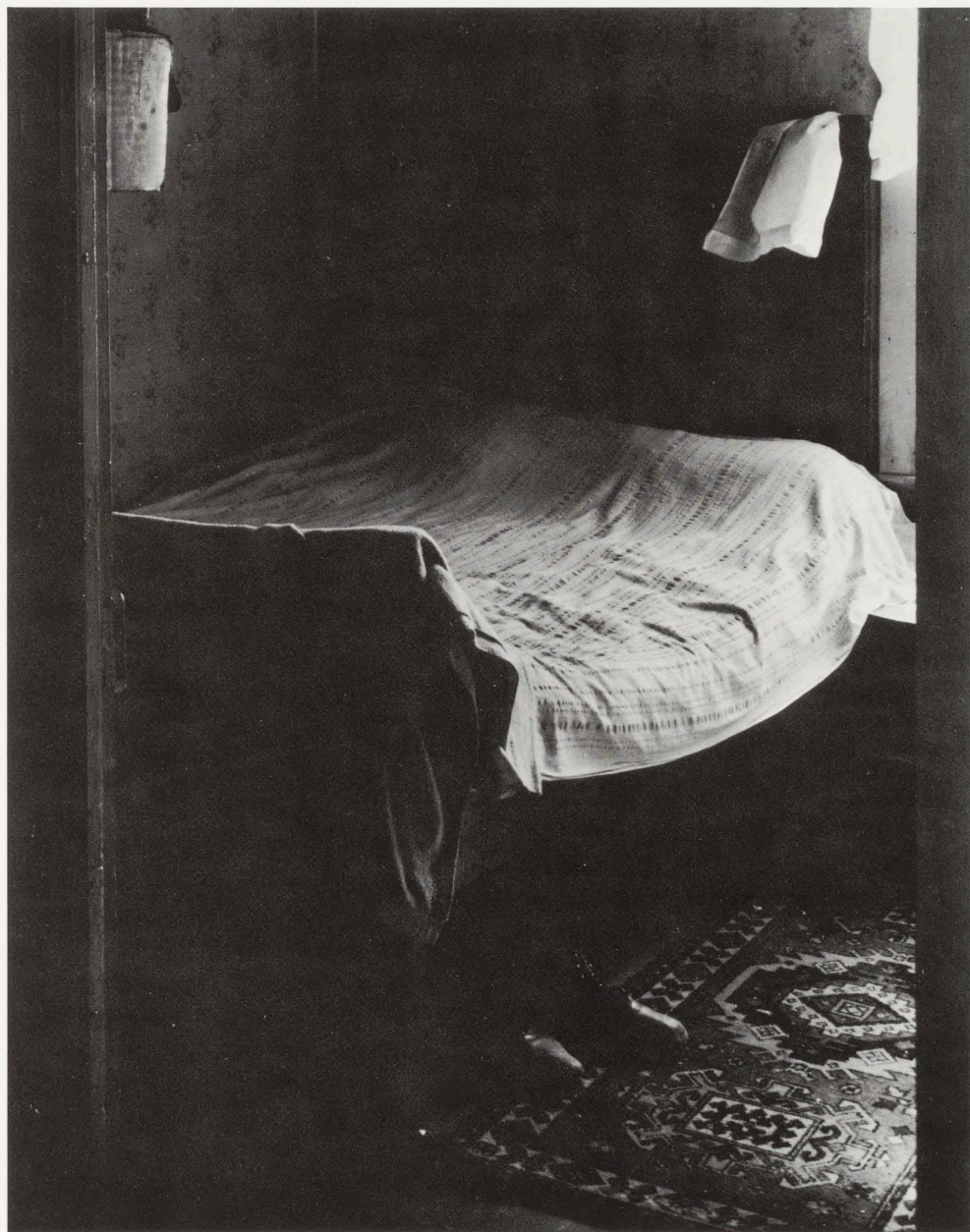
"WELL, says I, ain't it about time you was gettin' up? Well, says he, it's in my legs. What, says I. I can't move, says he." He felt in his pocket for his pipe, tapped the bowl on his palm. He took a ten-penny nail and scratched the ashes off the top. "Couldn't twitch his toes. Been lyin' there, I guess, eight or nine days."



THE drawer of the bureau, time's archive, is at once timely and timeless. While this image lasts it will forever be two o'clock. One powder after meals will continue to see the diner through a day of belching to the next meal. In these snippets from the reel of time we find time's elusive presence, and sense that we love, beyond the telling of it, what vanishes.



THERE are hotel beds that give us the feeling of a negative exposed numberless times, then there are beds with multiple impressions of a single missing tenant. The bed is occupied when the sleeper is absent, the way the shoes on the floor are occupied by feet, and the house by a ghost.



AGAINST the night air of the early morning she wore a man's sweater she never troubled to button, a stocking cap pulled low over her ears. Glass eggs to give the hens a timely suggestion weighted the pockets of the sweater. She was at home with the cold but ill at ease with the comfortable. Once a week she baked bread and once a month she baked pies that turned moss-green in the storm cave before they were eaten. She used a croquet mallet to set out stakes for her tomatoes and club a bullsnake to death that was pestering her chickens, but in general she frowned on violence and games. She would rather just sit, fanning herself with her apron, or sorting the dung-spotted eggs from the clean ones, than be caught dead or alive playing dominoes. If they turned up in her clothespins it was none of her business, and she couldn't care less.



His son went to the state Aggie College where he unlearned what little the old man had taught him. He was like his mother, raw-boned and stubborn, his Adam's apple so big his neck looked bent. He built himself a house like a caboose on a siding, just to make room beneath it for a furnace. In the summer he put a trailer on the rear of his pickup and let his farm sit while he fished in the Ozarks. Through the screen of the box elders, on a winter night, you could see him listening to the Lone Ranger, which was what come from sending a farm boy to a city college, or anywhere else.



ELEVEN sons and three daughters were born and raised in Ohio, but not all of the boys were home for the picture. The girls had married: they are the ones without the moustaches. As he looked at the picture the old man said, "Lord, it's fadin'!"

"Most of them dead and gone," she said, "think it would be fadin'."

"Come to think," he said, "they never had much as faces." He wheeled in his chair, pointed and said, "That's Mitchell. Just died over east of Sioux City." He wheeled back and wagged a finger through the doorway. "May's in Falls City. Indian Country. Man she married rode around all night in a mail car. When they stopped in Lincoln found him dead in it."

"All that jigglin'," she said, "didn't help him any."

He wheeled to face the piano. "Emerson's out in Cozad. All girls in his family."

"Had pictures on the wall he had painted. One of a dog you'd swear he'd come right down and bite you."

"Last time we saw him he was spry as a kid, and now he's gone."

"Way we'll all soon be gone," she said.



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

All images are black and white silver prints on 8 x 10 inch paper, with the exception of Nos. 18, 28, 30, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42 and 43, which are on 11 x 14 inch paper. The first fourteen photographs in the checklist are reproduced consecutively in the catalogue.

In the exhibition the following photographs are accompanied by text from Wright Morris's book *God's Country and My People*: Catalogue Nos. 35, 36, 42, 48 page 1; No. 49 page 29; No. 24 page 45; No. 16 page 73; No. 44 page 145; Nos. 18, 20, 30, 40, 43 page 149.

1. *Uncle Harry, The Home Place, 1947*
2. *Front Door, The Home Place, 1947*
3. *Clothes on Hooks, The Home Place, 1947*
4. *Drawer with Silverware, The Home Place, 1947*
5. *Straightback Chair, The Home Place, 1947*
6. *Reflection in Oval Mirror, The Home Place, 1947*
7. *Through the Lace Curtain, The Home Place, 1947*
8. *Stove and View of Parlor, The Home Place, 1947*
9. *Living Room, Ed's Place, 1947*
10. *Dresser Drawer, Ed's Place, 1947*
11. *Bedroom, Ed's Place, 1947*
12. *Comb on Dresser, The Home Place, 1947*
13. *Bedroom with Portrait, The Home Place, 1947*
14. *Morris Family Photograph, The Home Place, 1947,*
(Morris Family photograph taken in Ohio c. 1890)
15. *Pincushion, Ed's Place, 1947*
16. *Quilt Airing, The Home Place, 1947*
17. *Haystack, near Norfolk, Nebraska, 1947*
18. *Model T in Shed, The Home Place, 1947*
19. *Remnants of Bills of Lading on Freight Car, Nebraska, 1947*
20. *Barber Pole, Weeping Water, Nebraska, 1947*
21. *Back of Barber Chair, Eddie Cahow's Barbershop, 1947*
22. *Eggs in Pot, The Home Place, 1947*
23. *Hay Wagon, The Home Place, 1947*
24. *Album Photos, Ohio, 1948*
25. *Corn Field, Eastern Nebraska, 1947*
26. *Upstairs Bedroom, The Home Place, 1947*
27. *Dresser with Mirror, Southern Indiana, 1950*
28. *Bedroom and Washstand, Southern Indiana, 1950*
29. *Bank Grill, Cahow's Barbershop, 1947*
30. *Juke Box, Southern Indiana, 1950*
31. *Ed's Place, 1947*
32. *Barber Shop Interior, Cahow's, 1947*
33. *Cahow's Barbershop, 1947*
34. *Kokomo, Colorado, 1944*
35. *Farmhouse near McCook, Nebraska, 1940*
36. *Church near Milford, Nebraska, 1947*
37. *Church and House, Virginia City, Nevada, 1941*
38. *Houses on Incline, Virginia City, Nevada, 1941*
39. *House in Winter, near Lincoln, Nebraska, 1941*
40. *School Outhouse and Backstop, Nebraska, 1947*
41. *Meeting House, Southbury, Connecticut, 1940*
42. *Gano Grain Elevator, Western Kansas, 1940*
43. *Tombstone, Arizona, 1940*
44. *Faulkner Country, near Oxford, Mississippi, 1940*
45. *Store Fronts, Western Kansas, 1940*
46. *Bandstand, Iowa, 1947*
47. *Culpeper, Virginia, 1940*
48. *Tool Shed, The Home Place, 1947*
49. *Chicken Shed, Claremont, California, 1935*
50. *Barn with Hay Fork, The Home Place, 1947*
51. *Screened Window with Curtains, The Home Place, 1947*
52. *Rocker, The Home Place, 1947*
53. *Light Pole and Grain Elevator, Nebraska, 1947*

PHOTOGRAPHIC CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1910 Born in Central City, Nebraska.</p> <p>1919 Moved to Omaha, Nebraska; to Chicago in 1925.</p> <p>1930-33 Attended Pomona College, Claremont, California.</p> <p>1933-34 Wanderjahr in Europe. Bought first camera in Vienna.</p> <p>1934 Returned to California with the ambition of becoming a writer.</p> <p>1935 Purchased Rolleiflex camera. First images pictorial cloud photographs; later subjects were alleys, structures, and artifacts.</p> <p>1936 Wrote short prose paragraphs, poetically dense, which anticipated the text of <i>The Inhabitants</i>.</p> <p>1938 Moved to Middlebury, Connecticut. Photographed in Cape Cod and New England with first view camera, a 3¼ x 4¼ Graphic.</p> <p>1939 Actively began to combine photographs and prose. Met Jay Laughlin, editor and publisher of <i>New Directions</i>.</p> <p>1940 <i>New Directions</i> published a selection of <i>The Inhabitants</i>.
Museum of Modern Art, New York, purchased two prints for its collection.
First exhibition of photo-texts presented at the New School for Social Research, New York City.</p> <p>1940-41 Nine months of travels through the South, Midwest, and Southwest, expanding <i>Inhabitant</i> photographs.</p> | <p>1942 Received Guggenheim Fellowship and completed work on <i>The Inhabitants</i>.
Visited the Home Place, near Norfolk, Nebraska, on way to California and took photographs in Cahow's barbershop, Chapman, Nebraska.
Published first novel, <i>Uncle Dudley</i>.</p> <p>1943 Left California for Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.</p> <p>1946 Publication of <i>The Inhabitants</i> by Scribners.</p> <p>1947 Received second Guggenheim Fellowship to work on <i>The Home Place</i>. In May returned to the farm near Norfolk to take the photographs.</p> <p>1948 Scribners published <i>The Home Place</i>, a novel with photographic illustrations.</p> <p>1954 Traveled to Mexico on third Guggenheim Fellowship.</p> <p>1956 Won National Book Award for his tenth published book, a novel, <i>The Field of Vision</i>.</p> <p>1962-74 Taught Creative Writing, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California.</p> <p>1968 <i>God's Country and my People</i> published by Harper & Row.</p> <p>1972 Harper & Row published <i>Love Affair: A Venetian Journal</i>, with color photographs.</p> <p>1975 Fall semester residence at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.
Retrospective exhibition of 200 photographs at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery on the campus. A comprehensive catalogue, <i>Struc-</i></p> |
|---|---|

- tures and Artifacts, published. Exhibition traveled to various museums, 1976-78.
- 1976-77 Exhibitions at the Prakapas Gallery, New York City.
- 1977 *Conversations with Wright Morris*, including an extensive bibliography, published by the University of Nebraska Press.
- 1978-82 A number of critical essays on photography published: "In Our Image" (*Massachusetts Review*, Winter 1978); "Photographs, Images and Words" (*The American Scholar*, Autumn 1979); "The Camera Eye" (*Exposure* 19:2, 1981); and "Time Pieces" (*New York Times Magazine*, November 7, 1982).
- 1979 Series of lectures on photography at Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont, May and June.
Exhibitions at Friends of Carmel, California and at The University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley.
- 1980 Made prints for a portfolio of ten photographs to be issued by Witkin-Berley.
- 1981 Portfolio prints exhibited at the Witkin Gallery, New York City, in January.
Plains Song, a novel, received American Book Award.
Will's Boy: A Memoir published by Harper & Row.
- 1982 Received The Commonwealth Award for Literature.
Wright Morris: Photographs & Words published by The Friends of Photography.
Exhibition at the Grapestake Gallery, San Francisco.
Picture America, with photographs by Jim Alinder and text by Wright Morris, published by Little, Brown & Company.
- 1983 Exhibition at the Weston Gallery, Carmel, California.
Publication of *Solo: An American Dreamer in Europe 1933-34* by Harper & Row.
- Wright Morris and his wife Jo live in Mill Valley, California.

BOOKS BY WRIGHT MORRIS

NOVELS

My Uncle Dudley, 1942
The Man Who Was There, 1945
The World in the Attic, 1949
Man and Boy, 1951
The Works of Love, 1952
The Deep Sleep, 1953
The Huge Season, 1954
The Field of Vision, 1956
Love Among the Cannibals, 1957
Ceremony in Lone Tree, 1960
What a Way to Go, 1962
Cause for Wonder, 1963
One Day, 1965
In Orbit, 1967
Fire Sermon, 1971
War Games, 1972
A Life, 1973
The Fork River Space Project, 1977
Plains Song, 1980

PHOTO-TEXT

The Inhabitants, 1946
The Home Place, 1948
God's Country and My People, 1968
Love Affair: A Venetian Journal, 1972

ESSAYS

The Territory Ahead, 1958
A Bill of Rites, A Bill of Wrongs, A Bill of Goods, 1968
About Fiction, 1975
Earthly Delights, Unearthly Adornments, 1978

SHORT STORIES

Real Losses, Imaginary Gains, 1976

MEMOIRS

Will's Boy, 1981

ANTHOLOGIES

Wright Morris: A Reader, 1970

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To list all those who made this project a pleasure instead of a chore would require another publication this size. I would like to thank those on the Corcoran staff who assisted me—particularly those in the curatorial office, and the publicity department. I am especially grateful to Jane Livingston, Associate Director and Chief Curator, for giving me the opportunity to meet and work with Wright Morris. Frances Fralin, Assistant Curator, deserves special appreciation for her invaluable help in preparing this catalogue.

My thanks to Jo Morris for her hospitality and the enduring of my endless correspondence. And, of course, none of this would have been possible without the understanding, tolerance, and forbearance of Wright Morris whose example and work remains, for me, inspirational.

M.P.

This exhibition is one of a series, *Photography at the Corcoran*, supported by Polaroid Corporation and the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., a federal agency. The series is co-organized by Associate Director and Chief Curator Jane Livingston and Assistant Curator Frances Fralin.

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“To be at all critically, or as we have been fond of calling it, analytically minded—over and beyond an inherent love of the general many-colored picture of things—is to be subject to the superstition that object and places coherently grouped, disposed for human use, and addressed to it, must have a sense of their own, a mystic meaning proper to themselves to give out, that is, to the participant at once so interested and so detached as to be moved to a report of the matter. . .”

HENRY JAMES

The American Scene

THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D.C.